

Lyme Art Association Gallery in Old Lyme

Art and town have old ties

By Suzanne Trimel
Day Staff Writer

OLD LYME — The steam trains came clattering up the coast, letting off art-lovers here.

They came on weekends to view the paintings of a group of artists who had turned the critics' heads. They filled hotels from New London to Essex — the Old Lyme Inn, the Griswold and Osage' inns in Essex, Boxwood in Old Lyme, the Mohican Hotel in New London, the Morton House in Niantic and the Saybrook Inn.

They came because it was also a gala excursion.

The first Old Lyme art exhibit, as it was known, was organized in the summer of 1902 on the lawn of the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library.

The exhibits continued on the library lawn every summer for the next 19 years.

Then, in 1921, the Lyme Art Association's gallery on Lyme Street was completed. The building was commissioned by the artists who formed the Old Lyme Group. Among them were William Chadwick, Childe Hassam, William Foote and Arthur Heming. These were the artists who gave Old Lyme its reputation in the art world.

The exhibit was moved to the gallery in 1922 and for the next two decades it attracted national attention.

Old Lyme

Such newspapers as the New York Herald Tribune, the Baltimore Sun, The New York Times, the Boston Post, the Raleigh (N.C.) News-Observer published stories about the exhibit every summer.

The exhibit continues today, though with much less fanfare. The association's exhibit opened May 26 and runs through June 17.

"It was a gay, festive time throughout the summer," said Roger Dennis, a painter who lives in Niantic and who was a student of one of the Old Lyme artists during the late 20s. "There were lawn parties and the artists had what they called the Artist's Ball in the gallery. It was a costume ball and some of the fellows would paint scenes on the walls and we'd hire an orchestra. It was a fine time."

Many of those who made the journey to Old Lyme every summer were artists themselves, friends of various artists in the Old Lyme Group, or teachers from the academies of New York.

Others were dealers and collectors and critics. Many were city sophisticates, lured by a weekend in the country.

"In those years they had trains running regularly through here," said Dennis during an interview at his home. "They'd stop every hour in all the towns. During the exhibit they'd hire trains from New York to take people up here. There were hundreds every week."

There are few present members of the Lyme Art Association, formed by the original artists who spent summers at Florence Griswold's boarding house on Lyme Street, who remember the early years of the summer exhibits.

"It was a summer-long Mardi Gras," said Dennis.

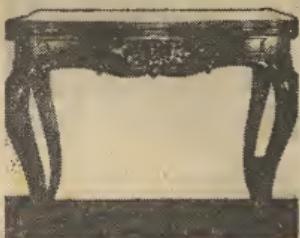
For those who lived in Old Lyme year-round, the exhibits provided a taste of culture at a time when little was available in this area.

Women's groups arranged lawn parties and teas for the artists and their friends.

The town's wealthier residents gave parties.

"You've got to remember," says Frederick Buchholz, an association member and former president for some 30 years, "that back in those early days, the '20s, there wasn't much in the way of cultural activities around here. There was no theater, no museums. The art show was it in those days and they made the most of it."

urniture



Card table

Collect Antique Furniture" by Will Theus, Alfred A. Knopf, hardcover, \$10.95; paperback, \$6.95. This is just what the title implies — a primer to point out the pitfalls in acquiring antique furniture, so that acquisitions will not only enhance the home and be a lasting pleasure to own but, as tastes change and the collector becomes more discriminating, can be disposed of without a loss of money — even possibly a gain. It covers styles, periods, construction, and concludes with a glossary of terms germane to antique furniture.

If you have any questions concerning the identification and evaluation of antique furniture, send a detailed description and one or more pictures of a single item with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to James G. McCollam, P.O. Box 687, Dunedin, Fla. 33528. (Published pictures cannot be returned.) Since the opinions stated here are based on superficial information, no responsibility is assumed. Questions of universal interest will be published, but all letters will be answered.

hes to help
weed woes

leaves also causes the soil to become more acid. Ground limestone should be added, according to directions on the bag of limestone, to "sweeten" the soil.

Mrs. Cole says that the most popular mulch most recently available to gardeners is .015 mls thick black po-

Some planning helpful for backyard gardener

STORRS — What types of vegetables does your family like? How much can your family consume? How much time can you and other members of your family allot to maintain your garden? Does putting up vegetables for later consumption fit into your lifestyle?

These are the major questions you should ask when you go about planning your home vegetable garden this year, says Edmond L. Marrotte, extension consumer horticulturist at the University of Connecticut.

If you only have limited time for a garden, a small, well-cared-for garden will probably outyield and be more satisfying than a large ill-kept weed patch. Plant only what the family likes and what they will consume as fresh and/or stored vegetables.

Marrotte, a staff member of the plant science department, advises you to have your garden site near your home. Having your garden as close to your home as possible will make your job easier in spending some time weeding and harvesting the fresh produce.

Select a level site in full sun away from buildings and trees. Keep in mind that buildings and trees cast shadows, which reduce available sunlight. Trees also compete for plant nutrients and water. If your garden is near an obstacle, try to place it on the southern side.

Some vegetables grow satisfactorily in shady areas. They are lettuce, endive, swiss chard, cabbage, brussel sprouts and collards. A rule of thumb to follow is if grass does well, then the leafy vegetables should do well also.

Next, determine the soil's fertility and pH and take the proper steps to correct any deficiency. You can request a soil test mailer from your University of Connecticut Extension Service field office. Field offices are located in Bethel, Brooklyn, Litchfield, Wallingford, Hartford, Had- dam, Norwichtown and Rockville. There is a charge of \$1 per soil sample. You will be notified of any deficiencies and corrective measures to take where required.

Be sure your garden site is well drained. For example, don't let water stand in puddles for more than 24 hours after a heavy rain. If you don't have such a site, then construct beds 8 to 12 inches high and not more than 4 feet wide to improve water drainage and aeration.

Mix in organic matter such as compost or peatmoss in excessively well-drained, sandy soils. This will increase the soil's water-holding capacity.

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